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MUSIC & LITERATURE

IN ENGLAND IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Papers delivered by James E. Phillips and Bertrand H. Bronson at the Second Clark Library Seminar, 24 October 1953

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Preface

SPONSORED jointly by the Library and the Department of English, University of California, Los Angeles, the second invitational seminar at the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library was held on 24 October 1953. The topic for discussion was the relationship of music and literature in England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The morning session was led by Professor James E. Phillips, and the afternoon one by Professor Bertrand H. Bronson.

The seminar was attended by fifty-one persons from fifteen institutions. The enthusiasm with which the opening remarks of Professors Phillips and Bronson were received by all present convinced us that their papers should be made available to a far larger audience. We have accordingly arranged to have them printed and distributed in the form of this pamphlet.

STEERING COMMITTEE FOR THE SEMINAR

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Poetry and Music in the Seventeenth Century

By JAMES E. PHILLIPS

Let me plead at the outset that you interpret very literally the subtitle given by the Steering Committee to my remarks: "discussion opened by . . . ." The relations of poetry and music obviously comprise a large subject involving numerous subordinate areas of special and often technical knowledge. Neither my own qualifications nor the time allotted me would permit even the most superficial survey of the whole field. My own interest is, I fear, a particularly narrow one—statements on the relationship of poetry and music by seventeenth-century theorists. But like most of the theorists whom I propose to discuss, I shall probably touch in vague and abstract fashion on a number of aspects of poetry and music. And since there is here present more than one highly qualified authority on each of these aspects, I rest in the hope that the most rewarding part of this seminar will be an ensuing discussion period which the *New Yorker* might label, Department of Correction, Amplification, and Abuse.

Perhaps at the start I should describe in rather broad terms the aspect of the relationship of poetry and music in seventeenth-century England that I should like to talk about this morning.

I think that anyone who reads the literary and music theorists of the late sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries will be struck by the persistence with which these theorists clung to an ideal concept of the proper union of poetry and music. They readily admitted the history, the nobility, and the future possibilities of each art separately. But they seemed to regard the combination of the two as an independent art, and—in the opinion of some theorists, at least—as an art superior to either of the component two. The concept was often expressed in the formula, "poetry plus melody equals music"; and in this inclusive and—as the Renaissance liked to think—classical sense of the term, music came to have an aesthetic and a system of rules of its own. By these standards, melody was considered to be governed by the words, or was—in the parlance of the theorists—the handmaiden of poetry. But the theorists were firm in their belief that poetry without music and music without poetry were equally inferior to a proper combination of the two.

This is the concept of the union of poetry and music which I should like to discuss now in more detail, first by describing the origin and the persistence of the ideal itself in the writings of Renaissance theorists, and then by commenting briefly on some of the devices and techniques prescribed by these writers for attaining the ideal in practice.

The origins of the concept in the musical humanism and the poetical experiments of mid-sixteenth century Continental academies have been so thoroughly described by D. P. Walker in a series of articles in the *Musical Review,* and by Frances Yates, in *The French Academies of the Sixteenth Century,* that I perhaps need do little more than summarize their findings here.

Two academies in particular were important for their activities in focusing the interest of sixteenth-century humanism on the problems of music and poetry: Jean de Baïf's *Académie de Poésie et de Musique,* instituted by royal decree in France, and the Florentine *Camerata,* in which Giovanni De'Bardi was the

principal figure. These academicians were impressed at the outset by the remarkable "effects" attributed to music by classical authority—Orpheus's power over the world of nature, Timotheus's influence on the passions of Alexander, and a host of others collected in that rich storehouse of musical "effects" stories, the *Vita Pythagoras* of Iamblichus. And being Christian humanists, they linked with these stories the biblical accounts of similar effects of music, such as David's curing of Saul.

Observing that the sixteenth-century music that they knew—elaborately polyphonic music in the medieval tradition, that buried words in contrapuntal intricacies—was achieving no such effects as these, the academicians concluded that music had lost something since antiquity—namely, the proper relation of words and notes. They read that Plato disapproved of the two arts, poetry and music, being separated, and that Plutarch implied throughout his essay *De Musica* that music and poetry are indistinguishable. They noted further that the first musicians were also poets, and that Orpheus, Timotheus, and David alike achieved their effects by words as well as by music. Latter-day victims of the revival of recorder playing may be pleased to be reminded that John Case, an English musical humanist, noted in *The Praise of Musicke* (1586) that Minerva gave up playing the recorder not because, as some thought, it puffed out her cheeks in unattractive fashion, but "as Aristotle rather thought, because the playing on a Recorder doth neither avail the mind, not help knowledge anything at all." The music alone, that is, could not produce the admired classical "effects."

But the academicians also found philosophical as well as historical authority for their conviction that neither poetry nor music alone could accomplish the effects achieved by the two in proper combination. In this respect, they took their lead from the Neoplatonism of Ficino, where the combination of poetry and music is identified with the *furor poëticus,* the first of those intuitive or "enthusiastic" stages in which the human soul, after

its thorough discipline in all the separate arts, begins its ascent back to the original One. Or, as Tyard, one of the French academicians, put it much more concretely, "The lowest point which the soul, in falling here below, has reached is the body, to which she is so firmly attached ... that the superior part is stunned and astonished by its fall, and the inferior part agitated and full of perturbations, whence arises a horrible discord and disorder.... She seems incapable of any just action unless, by some means, this dreadful discord is transformed into a gentle symphony, and this impertinent disorder reduced to a measured equality, well ordered and ordained. And to do this is a peculiar duty of Poetic enthusiasm (*furor poëticus*) ... by the well-accorded diversity of musical accords, chasing away the dissonant discords, and finally reducing the disorder to a certain equality, well and proportionately measured, and ordered in the gracious and grave facility of verses regulated by the careful observance of number and measure" (Yates, p. 80). That is to say, as the tones allay and order the passions, the poetry in the same instant directs the reason, and as a result, the soul is elevated a step further in its progress to perfection.

Such speculation by the academicians inevitably led, finally, to the conclusion that only in the exact union of words and music could the moral "effects" described by classical and biblical authorities be achieved. In the words of the Statutes of de Baïf's *Académie de Poésie et de Musique,* "In order to bring back into use music in its perfection which is to represent words in singing completed by sounds, harmony and melody, consisting in the choice and regulation of voices, sounds, and well harmonised accords, so as to produce the effect which the sense of the words requires, either lowering or raising or otherwise influencing the spirits, thus renewing the ancient fashion of composing measured verses to which are accommodated tunes likewise measured in accordance with metric art ... we have agreed to form an Academy" (Yates, p. 23). A similar conclusion, in terms of basic

principle, had been reached in the Florentine *Camerata,* where Vincenzo Galileo, father of the astronomer, attacked "modern music"—i.e., medieval polyphony—because by obscuring the words with musical ornamentation and elaboration for the sake of the music itself, it neglected the "parte piu nobile importante e principale della musica, che sono i concetti dell'animo espressi col mezzo delle parole," and where Caccini later argued for "quella maniera cotanto lodata da Platone e altri Filosofi che affermarono la music altro non essere, che la fauella, e'l rithmo, e il suono per vltimo, e non per lo contrario, à volere quei mirabili effetti, che ammirano gli Scrittori, e che non poteuano farsi per il contrappunto nelle moderne musiche" (Pattison, *Music and Poetry of the English Renaissance,* pp. 126, 127).

Such was the ideal of the relationship between music and poetry formulated by the "musical humanists." Its principal implications as to the relative functions of the two arts in combination are probably clear. The power of music alone over the passions was not denied, nor the power of poetry alone over the reason, or intellect. But to achieve the remarkable "effects" described in antiquity and in scripture, the two arts must be combined in an art higher than either of its components. In this combination, music clearly becomes the hand maiden to poetry; the handling of the tones, which will govern the passions, must be controlled by words, which will direct the intellect. Milton later was to recognize the humanists' basic identification of the arts when he wrote of poetry and music:

> Blest pair of Sirens, pledges of Heav'ns joy,
> Sphear-born harmonious Sisters, Voice and Verse,
> Wed your divine sounds, and mixt power employ....

But Milton was also to recognize the implications of this theory—the subservience of music to poetry—when he praised his musical collaborator Henry Lawes, who "First taught our English Music how to Span Words with just note and accent."

In fact, Milton was to exploit all aspects of the ideal union recommended by the musical humanists in what may have been a mild family argument. For in the Latin poem *Ad Patrem* he sought to justify to his musical father his own choice of a poetic career, by what amounts to a concise statement of the fundamental position of the academicians: "In fine," he says, in Professor Frank Patterson's translation, "what avails the empty modulations of the voice, when devoid of words and their meaning and of rhythmical language? Such a melody befits the choruses of the woods, not Orpheus, who checked the course of streams and added ears to the oaks by his poetry, not by his lyre, and by his singing reduced to tears the ghosts of the dead. It is from song that he has this glory. Do not, I beg, continue to think lightly of the holy Muses, nor regard as useless and poor those through whose boon you yourself skilfully adjust a thousand sounds to fitting rhythms, and, expert in varying your melodious voice by a thousand tuneful changes, may justly be heir to Arion's name. If it has been your fate to beget in me a poet, why do you think it strange if, being so closely united by the precious tie of blood, we pursue kindred art and related interests? Phoebus himself, in his desire to divide himself between two persons, gave one-half to me and the other half to my sire, and thus we, father and son, possess the divided deity."

Milton's echoes of the academicians' concept of poetry and music are not without precedent or sequent in seventeenth-century England. I should like to defer a necessary consideration of the techniques by which the academicians hoped to attain their ideal until after some account of the ideal itself as it persistently continued to underlie theoretical discussions of the relations of poetry and music in England to the end of the seventeenth century.

I cannot describe the way in which the humanists' conception of the "union of music and poetry" reached England because—quite frankly—I do not know. But the similarity of arguments

and authorities between continental theorists and theorists in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England leave little doubt that the ideal was shared by both. One is tempted to speculate that the "Areopagus" of Sidney and Spenser, which took over so many of the literary theories of the French academicians, also took over their views on the relationship of music and poetry. The Englishmen leave few clues on the subject, although it is perhaps worth noting, as Miss Yates does, that Sidney in the *Defense* describes poetry as suitable for music, observes that the ancient quantitative verse is more adaptable to music than modern accentual verse, and in his own experiments with quantitative verse in the *Arcadia,* introduces each song with some indication of the instrument suitable to accompany it—all directly in line with de Baïf's injunctions about the classical relation of poetry and music. But on all these points, I can only offer speculation.

When we turn to the musical theorists in England, however, we are on surer ground. John Case's *Praise of Musicke* in 1586, for example, cites the same authorities and employs the same arguments as the academicians to proclaim the supremacy of the union of poetry and music. Case applies the principle in particular to a defense of music in the church, and quoting Athanasius, argues that "To sing Psalmes artificially is not to make a shew of cunning Musick, but an argument, that the cogitations of our mindes do aptly agree with our musicke . . . for . . . they that sing so, as the melody of wordes with the quantitie of them, may agree with the harmony of the spirit, bee those which sing with the tung and with understanding also. . . . For the soule being intentive to the wordes doeth forgette the affections and perturbations: & being made mery with the pleasant sound is brought to a sense and feeling of Christ, and most excellent and heavenly cogitations." Case differs from the academicians in defending "artificial"—i.e., elaborately contrapuntal—music in setting words, rather than insisting on the strict tying of notes

in all voices to particular syllables. In this respect he probably reveals the lingering influence of the medieval musical tradition. But on the fundamental necessity for union of the arts to achieve the highest effects, he is in complete agreement with continental theorists.

Thomas Morley's *A Plain and Easy Introduction to Practical Music* (1597) is neither very plain nor very easy, but it *is* practical, and only incidentally concerned with theory. Morley's directions show little of the academic influence, but that his practice was based on the assumption that the union of poetry and music is the highest art, and that it is the duty of music to be controlled by the words is indicated when he concludes that a composer, by observing Morley's rules, "shall have a perfect agreement and, as it were, an harmonical consent betwixt the matter and the music, and likewise you shall be perfectly understood of the auditor what you sing, which is one of the highest degrees of praise which a musician in dittying can attain unto or wish for." Campion took the same position, but perhaps with greater awareness of the arguments of the musical humanists, for he acknowledges the strict joining of notes and syllable quantities in classical poetry as his model when, as he put it in his celebrated statement, he "chiefly aimed to couple my words and notes lovingly together."

A remarkable exposition of the doctrine of union is Charles Butler's *The Principles of Musick* (1636), which John Playford later in the century extensively plagiarized for his popular *Brief Introduction to the Skill of Musick* (1662), and which Hawkins, in the eighteenth century, praised as learned and valuable. The treatise is printed with the curious and confusing phonetic spelling which Butler advocated, and which gives his seventeenth-century prose a slight Brooklynese flavor. But it is perhaps worth noting that experiments with phonetic spelling were part of the academicians' effort to restore the exact classical relation of notes and words.

Music, as Butler discusses it in every aspect, clearly means to him melody plus poetry. He has little to say about instrumental music except insofar as it supports the word. For like most of his predecessors and contemporaries in the field of musical theory, he believes, as he puts it [in modified spelling], that "the Voice, which is the work of Nature, doth far exceed all these works of Art." Hence he arrives at his fundamental conception of music and poetry combined as the highest art. "Good Voices alone," he writes, "sounding only the Notes, are sufficient by their Melody and Harmoni, to delight the ear: but being furnished with some laudable Ditti, they become yet more excellent.... This numerous Ditti, or Rhyme, applyed to the Note, the Philosopher equalizes to the Melodi itself, for Resembling and Mooving manners and affections.... And afterward hee makes it a part of Music, shewing that Music is made as well by Poesi as by Melodi.... And therefore it is, that the most powerful Musicians (such as were Orpheus and Arion: yea such as was that Divine Psalmist) were also Poets. And such should our Musicians bee, if they will be complete."

Butler's statement may be taken, I think, as fairly representative of the fundamental attitude toward music that prevailed among seventeenth-century theorists. This is not to say, of course, that they disparaged or neglected music as a separate art. Thomas Mace, in his *Musick's Monument* (1676), waxes rhapsodic about the independent influence of melodic sound and rhythm, but he saves his real enthusiasm for the united arts; thus in describing the use of music in the church he says: "This Organ, when the Psalm was set before the Sermon, being let out, into all its Fulness of Stops, together with the Quire, began the Psalm. But when that Vast-Conchording-Unity of the whole Congregational-Chorus, came (as I may say) Thundering in, even so, as it made the very Ground shake under us; (Oh the unutterable ravishing Soul's delight!) In the which I was so transported, and wrapt up into High Contemplations, that there

was no room left in my whole Man, viz., Body, Soul and Spirit, for any thing below Divine and Heavenly Raptures." Such was the attitude, somewhat more moderately expressed, which characterized most of the treatises on music in the century. Thomas Ravenscroft's *Briefe Discourse of the True (but Neglected) Use of Charact'ring* (1614) is an effort to restore music, which he defines as "song and poetry," to its proper function, though perhaps with less regard for the exalted effects of the neoplatonists than for what he calls the "5. usual recreations"—Hunting, Hawking, Dauncing, Drinking, and Enamouring. Christopher Simpson's *Compendium of Practical Musick* (1667), after citing Descartes as his authority on the supremacy of vocal music "because it holds the greatest conformity to our spirits," proceeds to write a technical treatise which clearly keeps the composer in his place: "Your chief endevour," he admonishes, "must be, that your Notes do aptly express the sense and humour of [the Words]." Finally, the same concept and arguments characterize the defense of church music that was the principal theme of a series of St. Cecilia Day sermons preached and published between 1694 and 1697. One of the preachers, Sampson Estwick, concluded his sermon of 1696 with an account of the increase of joy "when melodious Sounds, agreeable to the Matter treated of, give each Word their due force and emphasis, especially when the Composer has an Eye upon the Sense, lays weight upon what is most material, does not clog his Parts with needless Repetitions, but orders his business so, that the Hearer shall be little interrupted, but shall follow him with Ease and Pleasure, whilst he raises your Ideas by a just representation of the Subject that lies before him."

The Rev. Mr. Estwick's remarks in 1696 indicate not only the persistence of the musical humanists' ideal, I believe, but also suggest that the theorists who held to the ideal had definite opinions as to how the perfect union of poetry and music was to be accomplished. I can indicate only a few of the techniques

regularly prescribed by seventeenth-century theorists, and these techniques only in broad and general terms. But they may serve to illustrate the ways in which the theorists at least thought that the ideal could be attained and the moral and religious "effects" achieved. Needless to say, in all the techniques prescribed, control of the music by the words, of the emotional by the intellectual, of the passionate by the rational, is the fundamental assumption and the guiding principle.

First of all, the musical humanists insisted on the rule that only one note of music be set to one syllable of a word. They objected strenuously to the medieval inclination—or barbaric practice, as they termed it—to stretch a syllable out over a florid series of different notes. They argued, quite rightly, that such a practice tended to obscure the meaning of the words, and accordingly deprived music of half its proper effect. Such insistence, of course, was not the peculiar innovation of the humanists. Writers on church music, in particular, insisted on the same principle both long before and long after the humanist ideal flourished. Cranmer, for example, declared in 1544: "The song that shall be made for the English service would not be full of notes, but, as near as may be, for every syllable a note, so that it may be sung distinctly and devoutly." But it was the humanists who gave new emphasis to the principle in the interests of securing what they regarded as the effective union of poetry and music. As Miss Yates has pointed out, the academicians took the extreme view, and in their experiments with music and poetry rigidly adhered to the principle of one note per syllable. English theorists adhered to the same rule, if not so strictly. Campion admired the Greeks and Latins for tying notes unexceptionally to syllable quantities, and sought to emulate them. Morley argued that "We must also have a care so to apply the notes to the words as in singing there be no barbarism committed; that is that we cause no syllable which is by nature short be expressed by many notes." And in 1667 Christopher Simpson was arguing, with most of his

fellow theorists, that he did not, as he put it, "fancy the setting of many notes to any one syllable, (though much in fashion in former times;) but I would have your Musick to be such, that the words may be plainly understood."

Secondly, in their effort to restore the power of words supported by music, the humanists tended to prefer homophonic to polyphonic settings. Again they were reacting against what they called the barbaric practice of elaborate polyphony in the medieval musical tradition, where each voice not only went its own separate melodic way, but its own rhythmic way as well. Gratifying as the results may have been—and are—musically, they were—and are—admittedly disastrous insofar as understanding of the words is concerned. Four voices singing the same words, but at different times and in different syllabification, are bound to be confusing. Continental academicians reacted against this practice in extreme fashion. In France, de Baïf's academy stressed what they called "rythme d'ensemble," in which each voice sang the same syllable at the same time, albeit on different tones—an emphasis that was to lead to remarkable developments in part-song in seventeenth-century England. In Italy, the academicians tended to stress, for the same ultimate purposes of intelligibility and "effect," a different principle of tying notes to words. As Bruce Pattison puts it, the Camerata went beyond the French academies, and advocated the single melodic line as the only music suitable to enhance the words; if several voices, or voices with instruments, were involved, they played and sang in unison—all producing the same note at the same time on the same syllable. The consequences of this principle for the development of recitative—the *stylo recitativo* of the Lawes brothers, for example—is familiar to all. But, whether in French part-song or in Italian recitative, the reaction of musical humanism against elaborate, word-obscuring polyphony in the interests of securing classical and biblical "effects" is clear.

The influence of such principles in England is perhaps more apparent in the practice of English composers than in the pronouncements of theorists. Among seventeenth-century theorists, at any rate, the humanists' demand for intelligibility in part-writing tended to take the form of protests against the excesses of polyphony rather than of a call for extremely rigid forms of homophony. Charles Butler's attitude in 1636 is perhaps representative, when he gives polyphonic music its due, but places first in his estimation part-song, or what he calls "counterpoint," "when the Notes of all the Parts being of equal time and number, go jointly together." But on the whole, English adherence to the homophonic principle of the humanists is reflected mainly in negative fashion—in strong protests against the unintelligibility of texts set to elaborate polyphonic music. We have already noted the Rev. Mr. Estwick's injunction that a composer "not clog his parts with needless repetition." But perhaps the most vivid assault on polyphonic settings is that of Prynne in his *Histriomastix* (1633), when he protests against such contrapuntal union of words and music as "a whorish harmony to tickle [men's eares], that it may justly seeme not to be a noyse made of men, but rather a bleating of brute beasts; whiles the Coristers ney descant as it were a sort of Colts; others bellowe a tenour, as it were a company of oxen; others barke a counterpoint, as it were a kennel of Dogs; others rore out a treble like a sort of Buls; others grunt out a base as it were a number of Hogs; so that a foule evill-favoured noise is made, but as for the wordes and sentences and the very matter it self, is nothing understanded at all; but the authority and power of judgment is taken away both from the minde and from the eares utterly."

A third technique advocated by the musical humanists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in their effort to achieve the classical effects from the union of music and poetry was strict control of the time and rhythmic values of the notes by the exact time and rhythmic values of the words. Such a principle,

carried to a literal extreme, would—and in some cases did—preclude the regular two- and three-beat musical measures with which we are familiar. Rather, the natural quantity and accent of the words would determine the pattern of long and short notes—not a predetermined and regular pattern of the musical rhythm. It was this rhythmic principle in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century music that in the eighteenth century led Dr. Burney, apparently unaware of the principle involved, to complain about the "false accents of the melody, in which there is so total a want of rhythm as renders the time extremely difficult to keep with accuracy and firmness." But the practice deplored by Dr. Burney exactly conforms to humanistic principles of control of music by words, even in rhythmic values.

Continental academicians of the sixteenth century were inclined to take this principle quite literally. Jean de Baïf, as Miss Yates observes, "tried to substitute quantity for accent as the basis of French verse; his object in doing this was to recover a closer union between poetry and music (and therefore more powerful 'effects') by making the value of the notes of music correspond to the quantity of the syllables." In Italy, a similar insistence that the natural accent or quantity of the syllables govern the value of the notes was to be another important influence on the development of the declamatory style in music.

English theorists adhered to the same general principle, although they were inclined to treat it less strictly in classical fashion than did de Baïf and the academicians. Of course, Campion's celebrated defense of English quantitative verse in his *Observations in the Art of English Poesy* (1602) is based largely on the kind of reasoning followed by the academicians. As he says at the outset of his treatise, "In joining of words to harmony there is nothing more offensive to the eare then to place a long sillable with a short note, or a short sillable with a long note, though in the last the vowell often beares it out. The world is made by Simmetry and proportion, and is in that re-

spect compared to Musick, and Musick to Poetry.... What Musick can there be where there is no proportion observed?" As Campion himself admits, however, he rarely put this extreme classical theory into practice, but as Pattison points out, his recognition of the dependence of musical rhythm on verbal rhythm probably accounts for some of Campion's loveliest lyric effects.

While English practice in this respect may have varied, subsequent writers on the theory of music and poetry in the seventeenth century clung to the fundamental principle with remarkable tenacity. Ravenscroft, in 1614, urged that composers write airs "not... for some small tickling of the outward Sence alone, but a great deale more solide, and sweetly united to Number, Measure, and Nature of the Ditty." The same basic assumption underlies Milton's praise of Henry Lawes, for teaching English music "how to Span Word with just note and accent," and Waller's praise of the same composer, who "alone may truly boast That not a syllable is lost." Simpson was underscoring the same principle in 1667 when he admonished would-be composers "not to apply... any long Note, to a short Syllable; nor a short Note to a Syllable that is long." Sir Hubert Parry has said, in the *Oxford History of Music,* that seventeenth-century songs composed with this principle in mind "appear to be written for amateurs... with no voice worth considering to recite poems in a melodious recitative, spaced out into periods in conformity with the length of the lines or literary phrases." Such an account may accurately describe the apparent results, but I think that it ignores the serious aesthetic principle that produced these results.

Finally, the theorists of the Renaissance, in discussing the relations of music and poetry, advocated certain general techniques whereby music could be made to enhance the meaning and the coloration of the words. Seventeenth-century English theorists in particular were explicit about these techniques, recommending specific musical effects appropriate to specific words or ideas,

and musical modes appropriate to more general literary tones and attitudes. But it should be emphasized that here again (according to the theorists, at any rate) the words were to be the controlling factor of musical melody and color in the ideal union of the arts.

"Word-painting"—that is, the effort to reflect musically the exact meaning and coloration of particular words—had been a prominent feature of both the theory and practice of the English madrigalists. Morley in his *Plain and Easy Introduction* prescribed a whole list of musical devices suitable for enhancing the meaning of specific words and ideas. Continental academicians and musical humanists, on the other hand, were inclined to deplore carrying the practice of "word-painting" by composers to extremes. Especially in the Florentine Camerata, the theorists insisted that on the basis of classical practice the melodic lines of the music should reflect only the natural accent and sound of the words, and some of the practitioners of the theory went so far as to limit the notes used in a song to those within the limited range of the normal speaking voice. In England, Campion probably is echoing something of this humanistic revolt against elaborate word-painting when he ridicules that music where, as he puts it, "the nature of every word is precisely expressed in the note: like the old exploded action in comedies, when if they did pronounce *Memini,* they would point to the hinder part of their heads; if *Video,* put their finger in their eye. But such childish observing of word is altogether ridiculous: and we ought to maintain, as well in notes as in action, a manly carriage; gracing no word, but that which is eminent and emphatical."

But as his last sentence suggests, Campion did not exclude word-painting entirely, nor did subsequent theorists in the seventeenth century. Butler's list of suggestions for word-painting is representative: "A manly, hard, angry, or cruel matter is to be expressed by hard and harsh short tones . . . and that

with the ordinari and unaltered notes of the scale; but words of effeminate lamentations, sorrowful passions, and complaints, are fitly exprest by the inordinate half-notes (such as are the small keys of the Virginals).... Also, woords importing the circumstances of Time and Place, are to be fitted with Notes agreeable: as those that signifieth running, or speedy motions... with short Notes, and the contrary with the contrary. Likewise those that signifieth height and ascending, with high notes; and depth or descending, with low." Thomas Mace's *Musick's Monument* in 1676 represents a somewhat different approach to the same problem; the intervals of the 2nd and the 7th, he observes, are "that we call a Dischord in Musick, and is a most Exact, and Lively Simile of the Bad Nature, viz., Perplexity, Vexation, Anxiety, Horrour, Torture, Hell, Devilishness, yea of the Devil itself," whereas conchords—the 3rd, 5th, and unison or octave,—may be employed to express opposite qualities as suggested by the words.

Inevitably associated with discussion of word-painting by the theorists was discussion of the use of the ancient modes in combining poetry with music. In view of the fact that the effect of the musical modes on the passions had been recognized by theorists from Plato onward, it is not surprising to find discussion of the modes prominent in treatises concerned with the union of poetry and music—a union designed to affect the reason and the passions at one and the same moment. Such discussion does indeed appear in practically all the seventeenth-century theorists, although it is not always easy to decide just what the various modes, under their classical names, meant to the theorists by this time. Not even sixteenth-century theorists could agree on the identification of the various modes, so that, as Miss Yates wryly observes, a composer who intended to induce Dorian sobriety and decorum might really, quite against his will, be arousing Phrygian enthusiasm. To complicate matters, from the beginning of the seventeenth century the musical modes themselves were rapidly breaking down under the influence of

chromaticism and the development toward modern tonality, or key systems. But whatever they may have meant to individual theorists, the classical names of the modes continued to be employed to designate systems of musical sounds considered capable of producing particular emotional or passionate states.

Not all theorists concerned with the effective union of poetry and music in the seventeenth century would agree with Butler in details, perhaps, but his recommendations represent the general way in which such theorists expected a composer to adapt his musical mode to the requirements of the text. The Dorian mode, he says, is generally set to a Psalm or other pious canticle, the notes answering to the number of syllables, to move sobriety, prudence, modesty, and godliness; the Lydian mode, set to hymns and anthems, with the notes often exceeding the number of syllables, "ravisheth the mind with a kind of ecstasi, lifting it up from the regard of earthly things, unto the desire of celestiall joyz"; the Aeolian "pacifyeth the passions of the mind," the Phrygian "inciteth to arms and activity," and the Ionian is "an effeminate and delicate kind of Music, set unto pleasant songs and sonnets of love, and such like fancies, for honest mirth and delight, chiefly in feasting and other merriments." Butler, like most of the theorists of his century, recognized the independent power of the musical modes over the passions, but like most of his contemporaries, too, he believed that they could exercise their greatest effect only when suitably and appropriately subjoined to poetry.

Such, then, were the principal techniques recommended by theorists of the Renaissance to bring about the remarkable effects considered possible when music and poetry are properly combined. They all add up, it is obvious, to the absolute control of music by the laws of poetry. The practical applications of such a theory in seventeenth-century song, chorus, and opera lie outside my present purpose. But it might be pertinent to suggest that, for the first half of the century, at least, the development in

all these applied fields of music and poetry is at least not contrary to the tendency of the theorists. The elaborately polyphonic madrigal gave way to the more verbally intelligible part-song—much to Dr. Fellowes' regret. The single-voiced air, governed in its movement by the meaning of the words, established itself as a principal lyric form. And the brothers Lawes, in writing music for the early forms of English opera, adopted the declamatory style that stemmed directly, as Professor Dent has noted, from the efforts of the academicians to restore the ancient relationship of music and poetry.

But in conclusion, let me hasten to assure the music historians present that I am fully aware that in the latter half of the century music was by no means keeping the subservient place in its union with poetry that the theorists valiantly continued to insist upon. As a rapidly expanding independent art, music was developing laws of rhythm, harmony, and melody of its own. It would not, I believe, be inaccurate to say that while in the earlier part of the century music had been made to follow the laws of poetry, in the latter part, when the arts are combined, poetry is made to follow the laws of music.

Hence it was that, by 1763, Dr. John Brown could publish a *Dissertation on the Rise, Union, and Power, the Progressions, and Corruptions, of Poetry and Music* in which—somewhat regretfully, I think—he not only remarks the end of the humanistic conception of the union and the impossibility of restoring it, but also gives a not-inaccurate summary of what had happened in the meantime to destroy it: "For now instrumental music, having assumed a new and more inviting Form, and being ennobled by the principles of a complex and varied Harmony, was introduced as being of itself a compleat Species, independent of Poetry or Song. This gave it an artificial and laboured Turn; while the composer went in Quest of curious Harmonies, Discords, Resolutions, Fugues, and Canons; and prided himself

(like the Poet) in a pompous Display of Art, to the neglect of Expression and true Pathos."

Yet a survey of the theorists shows that the old ideal of the union of the arts died hard. No one makes clearer this survival of the humanistic ideal in the face of growing—and acknowledged—practice to the contrary than John Dryden. Both of the St. Cecilia odes, in 1687 and 1697, are developed in terms of the power of music in the classic tradition. But I venture to suggest that in both, Dryden exalts the saint herself at the end as the symbol of the higher union of poetry and music. The earlier ode ends, it will be recalled:

> Orpheus could lead the savage race;
> And trees unrooted left their place,
> Sequacious of the lyre;
> But bright Cecilia rais'd the wonder high'r:
> When to her Organ vocal breath was giv'n,
> An angel heard, and straight appear'd,
> Mistaking earth for heav'n.

"Vocal breath" here may refer, as some commentators on the ode point out, to the wind pumped into the organ's pipes. But Dryden's reference to the elevating power of this "vocal breath" rather suggests to me the "effect" of the union of poetry and music which seventeenth-century theorists regularly referred to in their praise of vocal music. This interpretation of the passage is perhaps supported by the more explicit parallel passage at the culmination of *Alexander's Feast.* After describing Timotheus's marvelous effects with the lyre (but not the voice, it should be noted), Dryden concludes:

> At last, divine Cecilia came,
> Inventress of the vocal frame;
> The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,
> Enlarged the former narrow bounds,
> And added length to solemn sounds
> With nature's mother wit, and arts unknown before.

Here the echo of Neoplatonic "enthusiasm" in conjunction with references to the "divine" source of the vocal frame, and to enlarging the powers of purely instrumental music in an art unknown before seems to suggest very strongly that Cecilia's "vocal frame" is the union of poetry and music idealized by Dryden's English contemporaries.

But as a poet often involved in practical efforts to combine his art with music, Dryden was apparently quite aware of the extent to which the laws of music had come to govern the union of the arts in the practice of the late seventeenth century. Because of the demands of music, he writes in the preface to *Albion and Albanius* (1685), the poetry must "please hearing rather than gratify understanding." He has decided that because of its monosyllables, its consonants, and its lack of feminine rhymes, English is not really suited to the equal union of the arts after all. And he concludes with a cry—made bitter, perhaps, by the failure of this opera—that signals the final disillusionment of a musical humanist: "The same reasons which depress thought in an opera have a stronger effect upon the words, . . . for which reason I am often forced to coin new words, revive some that are antiquated, and botch others; as if I had not served out my time in poetry, but was bound apprentice to some doggerel rhymer, who makes songs to tunes, and sings them for a livelihood. It is true, I have not been often put to this drudgery; but where I have, the words will sufficiently show that I was then a slave to the composition, which I will never be again: *it is my part to invent, and the musician's to humor that invention.*"

I have italicized that final statement because therein is contained, I believe, the essence of seventeenth-century theory regarding the relationship of poetry and music.

Some Aspects of Music and Literature in the Eighteeenth Century

By BERTRAND H. BRONSON

In setting out, I hope for sympathy when I admit to harboring a virtual conviction that it was not I, but some one (to speak candidly) with a 'dangerous prevalence of the imagination' who consented in my name to address you on the topic announced. I have been looking for this individual for some weeks past, in order either to get him confined before he did further mischief or to beg him to tell me what he had in mind for me to say. But my search has been unsuccessful, and now I must face the music alone, and literally.

Not much in the eighteenth century fails to touch our subject in one way or another. This is the century which Leichtentritt, in his comprehensive survey, *Music, History, and Ideas,* accounts preëminently a musical age: that is, an age which found its supreme and most characteristic expression in music. Of no earlier age in the world's history, he declares, can this be said. Whether in architecture, sculpture, painting, poetry, or philosophy, the earlier past can produce monuments of the very first

magnitude, unsurpassed by anything in the last 250 years. But with the advent of Bach and Handel, music reached a towering height which was the undeniable climax of its history of the previous 2000 years and relative to which, in their own march of achievement, there were no comparable peaks at this time in the other arts.

I

Whichever way we turn, while we trace the cultural topography of eighteenth-century England,—its ideological or artistic hills and vales and water-courses, we are within sound of music. Are we following the antiquarian and historical impulse? There are for evidence the Three Choirs Festivals, begun in 1724 (and still continuing); the Academy of Ancient Music, established 1725/26; the Madrigal Society, formed about 1741; the Ancient Concerts, founded in 1776. There are the two ambitious and important Histories of Music, by Hawkins and Burney. There are the ample compendia of earlier cathedral music, anthems and motets, gathered by Greene and Boyce and Arnold. Are we observing the powerful and strengthening interest in the earlier poetry? With it go the abundant fresh settings of Elizabethan and seventeenth-century lyrics. There is the Shakespearean revival, of which Arne's and Boyce's settings and incidental pieces are only the most successful musical manifestation among many attractive things. And still more impressively there stretches the long line of varied and magnificent settings by Handel of great English texts: the Bible, Milton, and Dryden foremost among them.

It is in keeping with an age that thought Man the proper study of mankind that its major emphasis (and accomplishment) in music should be dramatic and, in a broad sense, social. As, in material things, the achievement of the century was not cathedrals but dwelling-houses and what went into them and round them, so its characteristic musical expression was Song, the

matching of words and notes in varying degrees of complexity and employed in all kinds of social ways. Along with the uses of song in the theatre—in opera, ballad-opera, "musical entertainment," and play—go the concerts in the pleasure-gardens, an endless opportunity for the development of talent in the smaller forms, and for the enjoyment of music in a socially informal and *al fresco* setting. Dozens of composers from excellent to indifferent, scores of singers, and absolute shoals of light lyrics were launched at these concerts; the verbal product being gathered and printed from time to time, with or without music, in book and pamphlet form; and the individual songs appearing by thousands on engraved single sheets. Warwick Wroth's vivid work, *The London Pleasure Gardens of the Eighteenth Century,* contains many details of this musical fare, and is doubtless familiarly known. Frank Kidson's and Alfred Moffat's admirably selected and edited *Minstrelsy of England* and *Songs of the Georgian Period* contain several hundred of the songs and you will remember the delightfully printed *Songs of the Gardens,* edited a few years ago by Peter Warlock for the Nonesuch Press, and containing among its two dozen songs pieces by Worgan, Defesch, Festing, Boyce, the two Arnes, and James Hook.

Neither should we forget those other outlets for social music on the semi-professional level, the convivial clubs that were formed for the practice of catches, canons, and glees. Some of these were long-lived: the Noblemen's and Gentlemen's Catch Club, founded in 1761, and still in existence (though but a babe to the Hibernian Catch Club of Dublin, the oldest musical society in Europe, established about 1680 and still alive); the Glee Club, begun 1787; the Concentores Sodales, and doubtless many another, like Goldsmith's Club of Choice Spirits. The best of them, as is well known, offered annual prizes for compositions in these popular forms, and the bulk of their work is to say the least imposing. Thomas Warren, Secretary of the Catch Club, edited 32 volumes of their pieces. Samuel Webbe published

nine volumes, James Sibbald four, J. Bland twenty or more volumes of Gentlemen's and Ladies' collections (separately!). *The Apollonian Harmony* of about 1790 has six volumes; Horsley's *Vocal Harmony* contains nine. In addition there are many similar collections of pieces by individual composers—Hayes, Webbe, Callcott, Cooke, J. Stafford Smith, and others.

But on the amateur and popular levels the appetite for song was fed by a constant supply of song-books from beginning to end of the century. Noteworthy at the outset were the successively larger editions of Durfey's *Songs Compleat, Pleasant, and Divertive,* better known as *Pills to Purge Melancholy,* culminating in the six-volume collection of 1719–20. This work may be regarded as almost a national collection of the popular song of that era. It includes favorite pieces by known composers, but in the main it comprises the floating melodies of the second half of the seventeenth century—such things as were familiar and readily available for use with a new topical song or a comic or rowdy ballad or lampoon on politics or fashion—"filthy tunes," as Falstaff called such melodies. The distinction between folk-song and popular song had not yet been conceived, and might have been still harder to draw in that day, because popular music was so much more truly of the people and so much closer to folk-music then than later. But there was a difference, Durfey's tunes often displaying citified, or at least suburban, tricks of modulation, and other self-consciousness less visible in the comparable and contemporary dance-collections of the Playfords. The miscellaneous character of the *Pills* must be emphasized, however, as well as the free and folk-like way in which Durfey pushed his tunes around to accommodate them to the words. The Scottish collections of the same date, Ramsay's *Musick for the Tea-Table Miscellany* and Thomson's *Orpheus Caledonius,* were, as we should expect, more folkish; but the closely subsequent English collections, such as Walsh's and Watts' *Musical Miscellany* in six volumes, cater to a much more sophisticated

taste. The long file of ballad-operas in their printed form are of course in themselves little anthologies of popular melody.

Several of the collections of the mid-century display their social character to the eye as well as to the ear. Bickham's *Musical Entertainer,* now a great rarity, offers an engraved scene with each song, 200 in all, and sometimes of considerable historical interest, like those picturing Vauxhall. Another of the same type, but still larger, is *Clio and Euterpe,* 1762, full of pleasant vignettes. In those years, also, pocket-size volumes of words alone were testifying to the passion for song. Some of them were surprisingly full: the three collections called respectively *The Linnet, The Thrush,* and *The Robin* together contain nearly 2000 lyrics, of which the tunes were presumed to be familiar to the purchaser. Toward the end of the century come Ritson's 3-volume collection of *English Songs,* his 2-volume collection of *Scotish Songs,* and his *Ancient Songs;* and, as fitting counterbalance to Durfey at the beginning, the national anthology of Scots song named *The Scots Musical Museum,* again in six volumes. This collection, as is well remembered, is the work for which Burns wrote so many of his deathless songs and for which also he preserved many a lovely folk-tune.

Of most of the collections named, profane love was the commonest theme. But we must not ignore the comparable flood of songs of sacred love current during the second half of the century among the "People called Methodists." Of these Charles Wesley wrote the words of perhaps seven thousand, to be sung to simple and familiar tunes, many of them probably taken from the great ocean of folk-music. It is on account of this outburst that George Sampson in a fine Warton Lecture recently called the Eighteenth Century "The Century of Divine Songs"; and although the phenomenon has been generally neglected in histories of literature and of music, it is obviously of great significance. There are increasing signs that the stature of Charles Wesley as a poet, at least, is gradually becoming recognized.

Throughout these decades, but particularly after 1740, the theorists in aesthetics were busy debating the relations and analogies between music and the other arts, and the specific capabilities and functions of music. Critics like Avison, Brown, Beattie, Webb, and Sir William Jones produced a series of essays that, while they hardly keep abreast of current musical practice, at least offer descriptions of the baroque, and partially organize the attitudes and ideas underlying it. Their treatises have been briefly but competently surveyed by Herbert Schueller in *The Musical Quarterly* for October, 1948. Schueller points out that their discussions mainly revolve about the problems of imitation in music, a subject with a long history, but able still to generate heat; and I shall ask you to spend a little time in considering certain aspects of it, more especially as they bear on the interconnections of music and literature.

II

We are aware that the theory of imitation extends far beyond a single province, and that, not without appeals to the authority of Aristotle, the doctrine was widely held in the eighteenth century that all arts are imitative. For the sake of a suggestive parallel with music, not I hope too far-fetched, we may begin with landscape gardening. This art, so typical of the period, could also be regarded as an art of imitation. For it imitated nature: not by leaving nature alone, but by divining the *meaning* latent in natural phenomena and creatively assisting its quasi-pictorial realization. That meaning, as the century saw it, included, and was incomplete without, references to human life and thought, which added temporal dimensions—remembrance of things past, ideas of antiquity and of classic art, sentiments of mortality and divine hope—to the spatial dimensions that met the eye. Hence the importance of ruins, statues, grottoes, church spires, urns and inscriptions, in Shenstone's conception of the art. These were not merely, as Humphreys so neatly writes, "the

punctuation marks in the grammar of natural meaning." Such allusions helped to give definite communicable significance to landscape. The parallel here with music is worth a moment's attention. In both arts the media are possessed of immediate sensuous appeal and rightly managed carry their own inherent patterned validity. But that explicit ideational content which the century demanded of its artifacts has to be borrowed or imported from without. They lend themselves very readily to associations, and in due course with repetitional use a language begins to develop, capable of subtler and subtler refinements of meaning, until (conceivably) the point is reached where the natural or the musical element can state its precisely shaded intention symbolically, without the presence of the interpretative device. Whether the Orientals ever developed the art of landscape to such a degree of ingenuity I do not know, but we all know the "meaning" of a yew-tree or an oak,—if not of a flower in a crannied wall. And we have lately learned that Bach habitually wrote for instruments with an extra-musical implication in mind.

In some sort, of course, the art of the landscape gardeners had already been adumbrated by the landscape poets, selecting and composing the significant items of the natural scene and supplying a meaning:

> See, on the mountain's southern side,
> Where the prospect opens wide,
> Where the evening gilds the tide,
> How close and small the hedges lie!
> What streaks of meadows cross the eye!
> A step methinks may pass the stream,
> So little distant dangers seem;
> So we mistake the future's face,
> Ey'd thro' hope's deluding glass;
> As yon summits soft and fair
> Clad in colours of the air,

Which, to those who journey near,
Barren, brown, and rough appear;
Still we tread the same coarse way:
The present's still a cloudy day ...
Thus is nature's vesture wrought
To instruct our wand'ring thought.

Later generations of nature poets were to drop the explicit gloss (though perhaps not so often as anti-classicists suppose) and it might at first be guessed that they had moved on to that foreseen stage where the natural detail carries a current meaning, like coin of the realm. But the fact is otherwise; for what these later poets are pursuing is not a common but a private meaning. They have a tryst with a secret love, into whose eyes they look for their own image, and who seems to answer their every mood. Autobiography is their métier; they sing themselves. Our present affair, however, is not with novelties of feeling but with conventions of expression,—and more particularly with musical conventions.

In so far as music communicates extra-musical meaning, it, like verbal languages, is a system of aural signs to which in certain contexts particular significance has been attached and which can be combined in a great many meaningful ways. Such a language must depend upon an agreement at least approximate among its users as to sense and modes of employment. In the main, these will be matters of arbitrary convention, like the meaning of words and phrases and the logic of grammar, which have to be painfully learned. The assertion might at first seem to contradict the notion of music as an imitative art; but we shall soon have to discriminate between kinds of imitation. On the primary level, music is of course capable of rudimentary mimicry of certain physical phenomena: sounds animal and human, sounds of water and wind and thunder, sounds of motion. Sounds, the theorists agreed, can be loud or soft, high or low; motions can be continuous or interrupted, even or uneven,

swift or slow. Music can reproduce these activities in elementary fashion, and *may* be so understood. But according to 'Hermes' Harris and the Encyclopedists, sound and motion pretty largely comprise the proper limits of musical imitation.

On this basic level, it is interesting to compare Johnson's remarks on Pope's dictum, "The sound must seem an echo to the sense." "This notion of representative metre," writes Johnson, and the desire of discovering frequent adaptations of the sound to the sense, have produced, in my opinion, many wild conceits and imaginary beauties. All that can furnish this representation are the sounds of the words considered singly, and the time in which they are pronounced. Every language has some words framed to exhibit the noises which they express, as *thump, rattle, growl, hiss.* These, however, are but few, and the poet cannot make them more, nor can they be of any use but when sound is to be mentioned ... The fancied resemblances, I fear, arise sometimes merely from the ambiguity of words; there is supposed to be some relation between a *soft* line and a *soft* couch, or between *hard* syllables and *hard* fortune.

Motion, however, may be in some sort exemplified; and yet it may be suspected that even in such resemblances the mind often governs the ear, and the sounds are estimated by their meanings.... Beauties of this kind are commonly fancied; and when real are technical and nugatory, not to be rejected and not to be solicited.

It will be noticed that Johnson puts poetical imitation exactly where the theorists put musical imitation, with the same limitations to sound and motion. He touches, moreover, on false resemblances arising from the heedless crossing of literal with figurative meanings. By analogy, the point raises consideration of one of the most notorious and widespread kinds of musical imitation. The commonest example is the picturing of high and low by sudden steep ascents and descents in the notes that carry or accompany the words. Baroque composers were far indeed from following Johnson's advice to treat such effects as fortuitous. So long ago as 1597, Thomas Morley had written:

If the subject be light, you must cause your music to go in motions which carry with them a celerity or quickness of time . . . ; if it be lamentable, the note must go in slow and heavy motions . . . Moreover, you must have a care that when your matter signifieth ascending, high heaven and such like, you make your music ascend: and . . . where your ditty speaks of descending, lowness, depth, hell and other such, you must make your music descend. For as it will be thought a great absurdity to talk of heaven and point downward to the earth: so it will be counted great incongruity if a musician upon the words *He ascended into heaven* should cause his music to descend.

To be sure, "high" and "low" in music are figurative expressions, but the metaphor in post-classical times seems by the Western world to have been universally understood, and it requires some effort to think it away. In fact, any discussion of music finds it indispensable. But, once having accepted the convention of an "up" and a "down" among musical tones, we can of course extend the figurative analogies at will. Bach uses the device of dropping to the lower bass to suggest Adam's "fall"; and also to indicate night, and darkness, and hell. Handel, in the Cecilia Ode, writes Dryden's phrase, "depth of pains and height of passion" as E to A above, to A at the octave, and back to E, the octave leap coming on the word *height,*—and such was no doubt Dryden's intention. Other instances occur at the line, "What passion cannot Music raise and quell," and again at "wond'ring, on their faces fell To worship."

We are already far enough from the physical correspondences with which we began, and we had best try to see what is happening. Two points are clear. The first is that we should get nowhere in grasping the full intention without the words. In order for the sound to seem an echo to the sense, we must start with the sense. The second point is that we are forced to perform a ratiocinative rather than an intuitive act. There is no need to object to this necessity. It is proper to an honest echo to start from the sense, and it seems a bit perverse of Johnson to com-

plain because he cannot have it the other way round. After all, Pope said "seem," not "be." When Johnson says that "in such resemblances the mind often governs the ear, and the sounds are estimated by their meaning," he is objecting to an axiom. But I must beware of putting more weight on an echo than an echo will bear, and I return to the baroque tonal language.

III

We shall waive for the present any discussion of the question, Whether music *ought* to express any but musical ideas, and agree that for some of the very greatest masters it has in fact done so. It should be profitable to look a little more closely at some of the means employed to that end. For this language is surely related to some of the profoundest and most characteristic elements of the eighteenth-century temper. To keep within bounds, let us draw most of our illustrations from a single masterpiece, Handel's setting of Dryden's *Song for St. Cecilia's Day,* for Soprano and Tenor, Chorus, and Orchestra. Dryden's poem belongs to the year 1687. Handel's work was written and performed in 1739, in an atmosphere of national excitement over the war with Spain, which gave topical significance to the third stanza.

The prevailing tonality of the work is D major, and the spirit of it, over all, is one of confidence and power and trust. The choice of key is of course by no means haphazard. This particular tonality is selected, not because Handel has thought of some musical themes that promise to lie comfortably in the key of D major, but because the dominant mood of Dryden's Ode *means* D major. The tonality could have preceded the formulation of a single phrase of the music in Handel's imagination. Why D major has this significance is not easy to tell, but it is not by Handelian fiat that it does so. Handel is following a tradition that has its origin in mists of cosmological theory:—involving the music of the spheres, planetary influences, the attributes

divine and human and affective that were believed to inhere severally in each of the ancient modes. Some of the aura surrounding the medieval modes floated over to influence the baroque feeling for keys. Primarily, however, it is less a matter of feeling than of received doctrine. It has nothing to do with private impressions or sensibilities—as a hyper-sensitive modern with absolute pitch will see the color of old rose when he hears C-sharp minor. On the contrary: this is objective, in that it is determined by the intellect rather than by the sense. It is not a meaning originally inherent in the key, but one that was put there by cogitation. It belongs to the *idea* of the key rather than to the sense-impression:—inevitably so, in an era when pitches were inconstant, and when mean temperament had yet to be firmly established. But by Handel's day the intellectual significance of the keys was sufficiently fixed to enable an emotional meaning to associate itself with the idea. So every fresh authoritative use of a particular tonality within the range of its accepted definitions could serve to confirm and refine and enrich the knowing experience of that tonality.

The tonality established also serves a structural purpose. In the present work, Handel departs from it several times, not in the way of occasional modulations to avoid monotony—though that, too, he does—but in order to change the subject or take up another case. Because Dryden's poem is artfully contrived with provision for musical effects, the tonal architecture is by implication relatively fixed, and this fact, like the designing a house for an owner who knows exactly what he wants, raises special problems in musical tact and logic. Dryden's third, fourth, fifth, and sixth stanzas are deliberately disconnected, describing various passions and the evocative power of several instruments. Handel, besides heightening these contrasts, must give the series a semblance of cohesion, and the sequence of chosen tonalities will be an important aid. Contrast alone in music will not suffice as an organizing principle. If we consider that the pace of the Ode

when read is about fifteen times faster than that of Handel's musical utterance, we can realize the much greater need in the latter to establish an underlying unity and to clarify relationships between the parts. Most of this work of tonal, as well as metrical, articulation is naturally brought into sharpest focus at the ends and beginnings of adjacent movements. During these moments we become aware of the subtle way in which two keys can reveal their kinship in the very act of asserting their difference.

Handel begins the Ode with an orchestral overture composed of three short, sharply contrasted movements. The first is *larghetto,* and employs a figure breath-taking in its suggestion of controlled power, a muscular crouch and spring from dominant up to tonic, tonic to third, tonic to fifth, tonic to octave, and back to the starting-point,—each return to the tonic being emphasized by an appoggiatura or turn that seems to establish the foothold more securely. Halfway, the tonality shifts from D major to A major, from which at the end it launches into a fugal *allegro* in D major again. The vigorous drive of this second movement is then quieted into a minuet, and we are ready for the voices. Nothing up to this point is able *by itself* to suggest any extra-musical ideas; and, in fact, all three of these movements are found again in the Fifth Concerto as the opening and closing parts of that work, which belongs to the same year.

Over sustained chords the tenor announces the first lines of the Ode, recitative: "From harmony, from heav'nly harmony This universal frame began." And then, to a tonality dark and continually shifting, no sooner defined than defying definition, come the words, "When Nature underneath a heap Of jarring atoms lay." The orchestra, we begin to notice, is running changes on broken diminished triads, until it occurs to us that here is a continual succession of the most avoided, "most dangerous" interval in music, the dreaded tritone, the "diabolus in musica." "Fa, sol, la, mi" hums Edmund in *Lear,* and we know at once

that he is plotting deviltry; and here are mi's contra fa's thick as leaves in Vallombrosa. The churning, yeasty but unassertive, figure continues while the lines are repeated, the melodic line at "could not heave her head" making a futile effort to rise and falling back dejected. Then, imperceptibly, the tonality clears to A major on the words, "The tuneful voice was heard from high," and the voice, unaccompanied, rings out three times on the cry, "Arise," with an interjected trumpet-like echo from the orchestra. Now, suddenly, there is a wild burst of life among the strings, on a disjunctive but energetic figure, as of particles striking together and rebounding chaotically and violently. This ceases, after two bars, as suddenly as it began; and the voice, on a melodic line that arches like a bow, announces,

> Then cold, and hot, and moist, and dry
> In order to their stations leap;

and suddenly again, with the same furious energy, the divided orchestra tosses a leaping figure in sixteenth-notes from one side to the other. We take it at first for more chaos, until we notice what the alternating choirs of high and low had concealed, that the leaping figures are entering at every beat on a perfectly regular and controlled descending scale. After two bars, the chaos returns, to be silenced by the voice repeating its declaration. Thereupon, chaos once more breaks in, but after a bar and a half falls into order as before on the leaping downward scale sequence, and after brief gestures of rebellion at the repeated words, "And music's pow'r obey," the movement is brought to an end with the same demonstration of orderly control:

> Those opposed eyes,
> Which, like the meteors of a troubled heaven,
> Did lately meet in the intestine shock
> And furious close of civil butchery,
> Shall now, in mutual well-beseeming ranks,
> March all one way.

One would surely have thought that so startlingly dramatic a *tour de force* as this would have been acclaimed on every hand. That it has escaped overt notice is proof how far out of the habit we have grown of scrutinizing this music for a kind of meaning which has latterly come to seem almost illegitimate, but which to the makers of it was indigenous to their conceptions. In his *Music in the Baroque Era,* Bukofzer has put the essential point with admirable force (p. 369):

> Music reached out from the audible into the inaudible world, it extended without a break from the world of the senses into that of the mind and intellect... We must recognize the speculative approach as one of the fundamentals of baroque music and baroque art in general without either exaggerating or belittling its importance. If abstract thoughts could be enhanced through poetic form, as we see in the philosophical poetry of the baroque era, then by the same token concrete works of art could be enhanced through abstract thought. Audible form and inaudible order were not mutually exclusive or opposed concepts, as they are today, but complementary aspects of one and the same experience: the unity of sensual and intellectual understanding.

Handel saves the rest of Dryden's first stanza,—appropriately in view of the recapitulative content,—for separate treatment by full chorus and orchestra. The orchestra opens with a syncopated theme of driving, purposeful energy. Incidentally, we may remark that Handel knows better than any one how to use syncopation to suggest eager, anticipatory impatience. With him it never suggests reluctance to go forward or an inclination to walk on the grass. The difference between his use of it and that of some later exponents is the difference between receiving a succession of electric shocks and brushing against India rubber. Handel here keeps his orchestra pressing vigorously ahead; but he spaces out the vocal parts in broad sustained tones, except at the line, "Through all the compass of the notes it ran," where he runs divisions up and down the scale, an octave at a time for the

voices and two or more in the strings. The movement ends with unflagging energy, and still in D major. Now is introduced the first structural shift of tonality. Handel with stanza two moves into G major, a key for him of calm confidence, of sunlight and security. The vocal statement is anticipated by a long cantilena for 'cello. The whole movement, which carries all of stanza two, is more of a hymn of praise and thanksgiving for "celestial sound" than of awe for music's power. It is a gently floating, sometimes soaring, meditative *andante* for soprano, in 3/4 time: a long moment of repose in a work full of excitement.

The stanza that follows returns to D major. It makes an obvious bid, with rather obvious effect, for popular applause. The trumpet has rather less solo work than one might have expected, though that is possibly because the instrument has a way of making itself felt as soloist, whatever else is going on. The drums also have less to do than we anticipate. The treatment of the tenor's line, "With shrill notes of anger and mortal alarms," is noteworthy: three descents from A major dominant to tonic on the same pentachord, with a concluding roulade on the last syllable; and above, a true trumpet call—not thematic—on successive triplets at the fifth, octave, and tonic. The movement reaches its climax with repeated cries of "Hark!" and "Charge!" over a drum-roll. The whole stanza is then repeated in compressed form by the full chorus and orchestra.

Handel finds it intolerable to obey Dryden's instructions and pass at once from all this martial excitement to the "soft complaining flute"—an effect which Dryden, aiming only at a striking contrast, did not wish to shun. The reason may lie in the fact that while reading the verses we are mainly conscious of the contrast alone, while in music the order of the contrast becomes much more important. To move from the "big" emotion of war directly into the "little" emotion of hopeless love strikes us as anticlimactic. At least, one may suspect that had the order been reversed there would have been no difficulty. Dryden's trumpet

and drum might have been shifted except for the fact that his flute, violin, and organ form an ascending sequence from earthly to heavenly, and so to the day of judgment and the dissolution of the "universal frame." There is thus no other suitable place for stanza three, and Handel respects the given order. He solves the difficulty, at least in part, by inserting an instrumental march in the same key, thereby bringing the martial fever under public, if still martial, control, and at the same time separating the antipathetic stanzas three and four. Even so, were there to be a break in performance, this would be the moment for it:—that is to say, after the March.

For the flute stanza, Handel drops to the relative minor, B minor,—the second extended shift of tonality in the work. This one, like the first, is a leisurely *andante* in 3/4. It is marked by imitative dialogue between the flute and the soprano, the voice assuming an impersonal, instrumental quality, with ornamental trills. Above lutelike "warbling" in the bass accompaniment the word "warbling" is itself extended over six bars of vocalization.

At the violin stanza, there is another change of key, this time to A major. The reasons appear to be intellectual rather than descriptive or impressionistic, and indeed this movement is one of the least pictorial of all. Leichentritt (*Musical Quarterly,* April, 1935) tells us that in his operas Handel is likely to employ G minor when depicting "passionate outbursts of jealous fury." And elsewhere, he uses A major for amorous delight. What motivates the present brilliant and spirited *allegro,* which seems on its face to exhibit no distress commensurate with the anguished words?

It seems clear that the reasons are partly strategic. To follow the pathetic *andante* portraying love-melancholy with another equally poignant minor movement would be ill-advised. No doubt Handel could invigorate the music sufficiently to differentiate the love-madness from the love-sadness. But G minor fol-

lowing upon the heels of B minor obviously would not do in any case: the clash of tonal systems precluded it. E minor would be possible but its connotations were also elegiac. Now, there is no reason why jealous pangs and fury should not be brightly and boldly articulated, and a major key is therefore both permissible and indicated by the context. Because of its tuning, the violin's two most congenial and brightest keys are D major and A major, and of these A major is the more brilliant. This was the moment of all moments in the work for the violin to be displayed. It was not yet time to return to D major, which Handel would need again for his big concluding chorus, and which in any case belonged especially to the trumpet.

Why did Dryden use the term "sharp" in characterizing the violins? If they were sharp in one sense, they were out of tune; and if they were sharp in another, were they not unpleasant in tonal quality? It seems likely that the epithet was due to recent events. When Charles came back from France, he came with a special liking for violins which he insisted should play for his pleasure on most festive occasions and even in church. They had a noticeably brighter tone than the viols, and began everywhere to displace the old-fashioned instruments. One who had the sound of the viols in his ears from childhood would be likely to think the new-fangled violins (only then being brought by N. Amati to their classical perfection of form and tone) too bright by half, however fashionable they might be at Court. The change was familiar to every one in Dryden's generation; and no doubt it was the impact of this recent shift in tonal fashion that lay behind his choice of the term "sharp" to describe the violin timbre, which made them suitable to express jealous pangs and height of passion.

Handel's way of depicting these emotions is entirely symbolic rather than expressive in the modern sense. We have to learn from the words what the intention is, and then listen through the mind's ear. Apart from a conspicuously recurring figure of

ascending chromatic notes (which conventionally indicate anguish), the intensity is signified by long ladder-like passages in sixteenths, all in the violin part except for two elaborate roulades on the accented syllable of "desperation," each three bars long. The texture of this movement is not very different from what one finds in a typical allegro in one of the violin sonatas. It is pure baroque, and as such makes more of a demand today on the listener's enlightened sympathy than any other part of the work. There is a very similar and familiar treatment of Rage in the *Messiah* (Why do the nations) and in Polyphemus' recitative in *Acis and Galatea.*

The *larghetto* which follows, in praise of the "sacred organ," is a hymn of the most ethereal loveliness, certainly the aesthetic climax of the Ode. For the first time the organ plays its compelling role, in perfect accord with the words. The movement carries Handel's special stamp of grave, lofty serenity, which the world identifies with the *largo* from *Xerxes.* As in the other two slow movements for soprano, the metre is again 3/4, with repeated chords on the second and third beat of each bar. The shift of tonality from the preceding movement is thrillingly dramatic, like being lifted to a purer air. F major is the established key for ideas of pastoral and contemplative happiness, and remained so throughout the century. Leichentritt reminds us that Beethoven wrote his Pastoral Symphony and "Spring" sonata in this key. For Handel it clearly also carried religious connotations, and was pastoral in a double sense. It is not an accident that at the words, "Notes inspiring holy love, Notes that wing their heav'nly ways," we are reminded of the nearly identical musical phrase in the *Messiah,* "He shall feed his flock." There is a momentary disturbance of the mood of rapt contemplation in two bars occurring after the voice has finished: a reference to F minor, like a wisp of cloud crossing the sun, and vanishing.

This divine movement is followed by a short and rhythmically vigorous one in the same tonality, *alla hornpipe;* and that by eight

bars, *largo,* of recitative in A minor. The work then returns to D major for the final chorus, laid out on massive chorale-like lines, the soprano solo alternating with the full choir of voices and strings. At "the last and dreadful hour," the tonality shifts to D minor, and with "this crumbling pageant" goes into a succession of alien keys, ending on A major. The soprano now enters alone, in D major, rising to high A with the announcement, "The trumpet shall be heard on high," and holding the high note for four bars while the trumpet climbs in partial imitation up to the same note, a second trumpet then joining on a fanfare below, supported by the whole orchestra and chorus. The last two lines are treated first canonically by chorus and strings, then in concert with the whole orchestra; and the work is finished.

IV

We need not labor any longer the importance of tonality in this world, except to emphasize that it was a component of a *current* musical language and, as such, neither had to establish its significance independently in the individual work, nor was limited to a personal meaning elaborated by a single composer. It was rooted in general agreement, and had the strength of common consent. But it was only one element in this language. Bukofzer tells us that Andreas Herbst, a mid-seventeenth-century theorist, distinguishes *verba* and *res,* words and things. The *things* meant are states of being, emotional states, like sadness, as distinct from verbal notions or ideas. The *res* are connected with specific tonalities, as we see in Handel's practice. But the translation of ideas or *verba* into music is more complicated. Ideas were classified as *Motus et Locorum:* words of motion and place; nouns, verbs; and adverbs of time. To correspond with these, musical tropes were devised. The system was enlarged and developed by Johannes Mattheson, the close friend of Handel's youth. Music, he says, is sound-speech (*Klangrede*) and declares: "It is the ultimate aim of music, by means of the naked

tones and their rhythm, to excite all passions as successfully as the best orator." The purely technical side of music must be understood and employed, but "Descriptio" is the surest and most essential means. The *Affekten,* the Passions, have to be "beschrieben oder gemalet," described or painted.

"Great thoughts," wrote Johnson, "are always general." The fundamental urge of the new classicism was to discover Law, to get beyond the private to the common significance, to escape from the prison of particulars to the freedom of the general, to the realm of great thoughts that embrace man and his place in the universe. Baroque music is but one manifestation of this far-reaching ambition, but it is, I think, a rather neglected one in this view. It was in order to give music a meaning as broad and general as philosophy or literature that the baroque language was developed. The ruling postulates and habits of thought of the age find significant expression here as elsewhere, and instructive analogies and correlations with the literary arts can be discovered. Fundamental agreement as to ends gives rise to analogous conventions among means. Perhaps we can push our exploration of one or two of these conventions a little farther on the less technical side.

Because men wished to understand and rationalize human existence, they needed to objectify the emotional life; and the doctrine known as *Affektenlehre* is a major effort to get the passions out where men can look at them. It is a form of personification, and thus perforce has radical connections with earlier allegorical impulses and with the dominant forms of medieval and renaissance art. The urge to allegory had of course by no means died out in the eighteenth century. The widespread love of personification in the poetry of the age is a notorious manifestation of it; and the allegorical fable in the periodical essays is another. It sometimes appears where we least expect it. One might trace a line through the morality plays back to the medieval literature of personified debate, to the *Roman de la Rose* and

beyond, if one were to look for the antecedents of the following paragraph in *Tom Jones* (Bk. VI, ch. 13):

Black George having received the purse [intended by Sophia for Tom], set forward towards the alehouse; but in the way a thought occurred to him, whether he should not detain this money likewise. His conscience, however, immediately started at this suggestion, and began to upbraid him with ingratitude to his benefactor. To this his avarice answered, That his conscience should have considered the matter before, when he deprived poor Jones of his £500. That having quietly acquiesced in what was of so much greater importance, it was absurd, if not downright hypocrisy, to affect any qualms at this trifle. In return to which, Conscience, like a good lawyer, attempted to distinguish between an absolute breach of trust, as here, where the goods were delivered, and a bare concealment of what was found, as in the former case. Avarice presently treated this with ridicule, called it a distinction without a difference, and absolutely insisted that when once all pretensions of honour and virtue were given up in any one instance, (that) there was no precedent for resorting to them upon a second occasion. In short, poor Conscience had certainly been defeated in the argument, had not Fear stept in to her assistance, and very strenuously urged that the real distinction between the two actions, did not lie in the different degrees of honour but of safety: for that the secreting the £500 was a matter of very little hazard; whereas the detaining the sixteen guineas was liable to the utmost danger of discovery. By this friendly aid of Fear, Conscience obtained a complete victory in the mind of Black George, and, after making him a few compliments on his honesty, forced him to deliver the money to Jones.

From his general censure of Fielding, Johnson should have excepted this good-humored dissection of a limed soul, which conforms so closely to Imlac's prescription. It would be too painful to stretch so perfect a confection upon the rack of pedagogical demonstration, but I cannot resist remarking that it is the allegorical machine that has here turned Black George into Everyman. This strikes me as a shining example of benefits forgot by

later times—benefits derived from the skillful use of personification, or what I once only half-playfully called the "Abstractive Correlative."

Turning back now to music, we may inquire how the same intention was fulfilled in that medium. How does Handel personify? The process is naturally best seen in his operas, and in this connection I should like to read a few sentences from Leichentritt (*Music, History, and Ideas,* p. 150), who gives much more authority to the answer than I could possibly do. "In Handel's manner of psychological analysis and characterization," he writes,

> the systematic, rationalistic spirit of the age is reflected. A character in a Handel opera is expressed musically by the sum of the arias given to him. Each aria reveals a different characteristic. Thus, for instance, in the opera *Alceste,* the heroine, Alcestis, expresses in her [six] arias the various sentiments agitating her in such a manner as to reveal to the listener her individual character ... presenting every emotion in isolation, unmixed, pure, and leaving it to the listener to form an impression of [the] character as a whole. [In Handel's dramatic music] the contest of emotions *in abstracto,* rather than the acting characters, is the central point of interest.

If this be true,—and one's own experience confirms it,—one can easily perceive how closely analogous in this province of his art is Handel's technique to that of the allegorist in verse or prose. It impersonalizes personality by giving the facets of the individual emotional life separate and independent embodiment. The "passions" are objectified in a series of personifications, and thereby we approach 'general and transcendental truths, divested of the minuter discriminations, exhibited in their abstracted and invariable state.' Thus Handel can write—to appropriate the rest of Johnson's statement—"as the interpreter of nature, and the legislator of mankind ... presiding over the thoughts and manners of future generations, as a being superior to time and place."

Even in the Ode, matters are conducted, although (because of

Dryden's libretto) more arbitrarily, according to the same rationalistic ordonnance. Here the passions are represented as absolutes, disconnected or at least separable from men. We may compare the even clearer cases of Alexander's Feast and Collins' Ode, *The Passions.* One wonders, parenthetically, whether some lingering vestiges of this ancient mythology survived as genuine belief into the eighteenth century, to give a sense of helpless irresponsibility to persons, whether actual or imagined, in the throes of some emotional seizure. It would go far to explain the actions of Tom Jones in a crisis, or Boswell's fatalistic submission to his fits of Hypochondria, if it were so. Dryden, subscribing for poetic reasons to the ancient doctrine, depicts music's power to raise and subdue any passion at will, like what is delivered of Orpheus. There is a double personification here: the passions are personified, and the musical instruments that serve to rouse them have an autonomous life. This last is a poetical fancy that, so far as I know, has nothing to do with the *Affektenlehre* with which we have been concerned. The theorists were indeed very sceptical about the powers of instruments by themselves to paint the passions meaningfully, unless where words had already given a clue. That particular instruments had associations or affinities with particular moods was not denied; but the potential range of allusion was ordinarily too wide to be of much use. The drum, yes; the sacred organ, yes. The flute and the lute are arbitrary, and the violin is so, too. The trumpet, even in the Ode itself, has very divergent connotations, first as the inciter to battle, and then as the "tuba mirum spargens sonum Per sepulcra regionum." But the essential importance of words in the theory of the passions is reflected in the text of the Ode by being made instrumental to the climax—at least if I understand the climax correctly. For it is when "vocal breath" is added to Cecilia's playing that the angels become confused. [I suppose it is possible to interpret "vocal breath" as the perfecting of the instrument itself by adding a *vox humana* stop.] Thus, it is the marriage of

"perfect music unto noble words" that produces the highest, richest musical achievement. There are profound causes for the post-classical, last-minute emergence of pure instrumental music in Western history, to its present position of dominant importance. Never before, probably, has caviar been served as the main course.

We have, of course, not even scratched the surface in describing the intellectual complexities of this baroque language of music. The four levels of meaning in medieval explication are relatively simple, compared to some of Bach's convolutions of significance. The curious may consult Manfred Bukofzer's illuminating essay, "Allegory in Baroque Music" (from which I have drawn facts and illustrations), for a demonstration of five different allegories simultaneously appearing in a single cantata by Bach,—not one of which would be perceptible to the untutored listener at a performance.

V

It is literally shocking to turn from a complexity such as this, involving art and mind and heart in total devotion, to the products of the popular musical genius—the vulgar music in the best sense. There are, of course, scores of levels—the cliffs of Helicon are terraced—from those who, as Burns puts it, "never drank the Muses' stank" upward to where there is an uneasy awareness of what is still above. When, in the famous song in *Semele* (Where'er you walk), Handel subjects the monosyllable "shade" to melismatic treatment, with two rests interrupting its flow, he is describing the spreading umbrage, not unbroken, of the animated trees. When, in Polly's complaint of the "saucy jade" her rival, she sings to Macheath, "How can you see me *made* the scoff of such a gipsy?," treating the monosyllable "made" in nearly identical fashion, we realize what kind of sense the average "sensible" person would probably make out of such artifice.

No doubt, also, the common-sense view had many defenders who happened not to set down their judgment in writing.

One of those who did so—a very distinguished one—had clear reasons for his opinion, and a practised pen. This was John Wesley, who published a pamphlet entitled "Thoughts on the Power of Music." To him, the hint of intellectual appeals in music was at best ridiculous, at worst sinful. His distinctions did not stop half way. It is, he holds, within the power of melody "to raise various passions in the human mind." But harmony, "namely, a contrast of various notes, opposite to and blended with each other," appeals not to the emotions but to the intellect. "What," he writes, "has counterpoint to do with the passions? It is applied to the ear, to the imagination, or internal sense. It no more affects the passions than the judgment." As for instrumental music, "artificial sounds without any words at all," what use does it serve? It has nothing to do with the passions, with the judgment, with reason, or common sense: "All these are utterly excluded by delicate unmeaning sounds." Polyphony? "Appointing different words to be sung by different persons at the same time... is glaringly, undeniably contrary to common-sense." Nevertheless, "this astonishing jargon has found a place even in the worship of God. It runs through (O pity! O shame!) the greatest part of even our Church Music! It is found even in the finest of our Anthems and in the most solemn parts of our public worship. Let any impartial, any unprejudiced persons say whether there can be a more direct mocking of God." [Cf. Fred Luke Wiseman, "John Wesley as a Musician," in *Wesley Studies by Various Writers,* pp. 156–160. London, 1903.] Doubtless, Wesley approved of the caveat in one of his brother's hymns:

> Still let us on our guard be found,
> And watch against the power of sound
> With sacred jealousy,
> Lest haply sense should damp our zeal,
> And music's charms bewitch and steal
> Our hearts away from Thee.

Nevertheless, John Wesley had every right to consider himself a music-lover. It was owing originally to him that music became an essential element in the Methodist worship. He insisted on the importance of congregational singing; determined what kind of music should be sung, and gave instruction as to when and how it should be sung. He stood for no whining and droning, but ordered his followers to sing out with wholehearted, open-mouthed fervor, and at a good pace. He selected tunes for his own and his brother's hymns, and he assembled and edited a number of hymn-books before the definitive collection of 1780, which has been the heart of all subsequent Methodist hymnals. Musical talent ran in the family, and rose to genius in a later generation.

It is difficult to recover an accurate idea of early Methodist hymnody. In this country, Methodist tune-books dating before 1800 appear to be virtually non-existent. For our information, therefore, we must rely on one or two very brief recent studies and on indirect contemporary testimony. James T. Lightwood has identified the contents of the earliest collection, the so-called "Foundery Tune-Book," of 1736. It contained 42 tunes, of which a third were English, a third were German, and the rest mostly of unknown origin. The German tunes came mostly from Freylinghausen's and Jacobi's song-books of 1705 and 1722, and reflect the profound influence of the Moravians on Wesley. They are mostly chorales. The English sources are miscellaneous and go back as far as Day's and Parker's psalm-books of the 1560's. A few are by known composers: Tallis, Gibbons, Croft, and two or three others, including—rather surprisingly—Handel, whose march in *Richard II* is here adapted and named "Jericho." The authoritative psalm-books are rather lightly drawn upon by Wesley, who was quite willing to reach out in secular directions for a good tune.

The 1742 collection was somewhat larger, and that of 1761, "Select Hymns with Tunes Annext, designed chiefly for the use

of the People called Methodists," contains 102 tunes and 133 hymns. Included is Wesley's Grounds of Vocal Music. The hymns are arranged according to metrical pattern. They include most of the 1742 collection, and sixteen tunes written for the Methodists by J. F. Lampe, rather more florid than the others. Nearly half the collection is in triple time; nearly a third in a minor key. The last line or half-line of the hymns frequently repeats as a sort of refrain, and there are four "Hallelujah" refrains; but none of the so-called "Old Methodist Tunes" appears in this book. For a clue we turn elsewhere.

In the autumn of 1766, an attack of the gout took Horace Walpole to Bath, whence he wrote to Chute, on the 10th of October:

> My health advances faster than my amusements. However, I have been at one opera, Mr. Wesley's. They have boys and girls with charming voices, that sing hymns, in parts, to Scotch ballad tunes; but indeed so long, that one would think they were already in eternity, and knew how much time they had before them.

This passage raises questions: Did Wesley, who himself preached on that particular day, approve or merely tolerate the part-singing? Was it canonic, like the "fuguing-tunes" of early American worship, or only SATB harmony? This was the Countess of Huntingdon's chapel, where things were done with more refinement than elsewhere; and Walpole adds in the same letter that he is "glad to see that luxury is creeping in among them before persecution"; so that the music may not have been typical. But what are we to understand by "Scotch ballad tunes"? In Wesley's own hymnals, so far as I can discover, there are no tunes that would be likely to be taken as Scottish folksong, though a few of those from unknown sources appear to have Welsh affiliations. On the other hand, we now know, thanks largely to George Pullen Jackson's researches, that the very stuff out of which the so-called "white spirituals" were made throughout the last century, in New England and the Southeast, was

British traditional folk-music, including a large infusion of Scottish tunes in gapped scales. Baptists and Methodists were the chief disseminators of these songs, and of course the latter have within recent memory always enjoyed a reputation for lyrical enterprise in their worship. A likely inference is that long before the days of Moody and Sankey, and even before the days of Lowell Mason, the Methodists were employing a great many folk-tunes that never got into their hymnals and were never perhaps officially sanctioned. With Wesley's single-minded love of melody, and with his all-powerful approval, Methodism was a singing faith; and the traditional tunes would be the ones that his congregations would have known and loved from childhood. If perhaps he himself would have preferred more discrimination in choosing, his lay-preachers certainly would be hospitable to the use of the people's own music; and Wesley, seeing that it was innocent and apt for the work of God, would not be likely to stop it. There is a familiar story that Charles Wesley, interrupted in his preaching by some rowdy sailors singing "Nancy Dawson," compounded with them by declaring that he liked their tune well, and promising to supply them the next day with some better words to it. In any case, any one who poured out hymns at Charles Wesley's rate of speed would always be bankrupt of fresh tunes, and would welcome them from every quarter. There must have been a natural reluctance to use the same tune again and again, always with a new text; and once a favorite tune and text had become closely united, they would not easily be divorced. The official tune-books were certainly insufficient for the thousands of hymns that Charles Wesley wrote.

Thus it must have happened that Methodism became one of the main disseminating agents of popular melody. At the same time, even on the higher levels there was a growing revulsion from the complexities of the baroque to simpler forms, in every kind of music, vocal or instrumental. The tendency toward the plain, the uncomplicated, the popular, was part of the spirit of

the age, and was manifest on the Continent as well as in England. In Germany, for example, Leichentritt can declare (*Music, History, and Ideas,* p. 163), with the exhaustive work of Max Friedlaender to support the statement: "The hundreds of song melodies written at this time . . . seem almost primitive in their bare harmony, their intentional lack of all artistic complication. Nevertheless, it was out of their artless style that Schubert's incomparable songs grew in the course of time." The seeds had been sown, and interest in popular balladry and song was springing up everywhere, to lead to Herder and the brothers Grimm, to Percy, Ritson, Scott, and Jamieson. It was, if not inevitable, at least beautifully appropriate that at this historical moment, and no other, Robert Burns should make his appearance.

Burns was one of the few poets who never, or seldom, wrote a lyric without a tune in mind to which it was to go. The consequence of this fact is, of course, that the metrical conditions of his composition were settled in advance. He had no freedom to innovate or to alter the stanzaic pattern during the course of the song; and, if he made any dramatic shift in the tone from one stanza to another, it was almost certain, he could rest assured, to be neutralized in its effect by having to conform to the normative musical statement. For any variety, he would have to rely on the refrain, which to make its due impact would have to be a full-length *burden*—that is, of equivalent length with the stanza proper. Or, if the tune had no such element, it would be less monotonous if it were a double-strain tune, accommodating two quatrains in a single full statement. In another view, these two cases are identical: quatrain plus *burden* equals two-strain tune. Although I have not taken a thorough census, I think it will be found that a large majority of Burns's songs conform to the double pattern, and fill out an eight-phrase tune or its equivalent. The texts that are printed in quatrains must be checked by the tunes themselves unless the number of stanzas is odd; and sometimes the odd stanza will prove to be a *burden* that is in-

tended to be sung after each regular stanza. Indeed, to leaf through the texts of his songs is to realize that they are nearly unthinkable without their tunes. Their verbal patterns, their repeated lines, the frequent incidence of "O" at the end of lines, the undodgeable refrains or choruses: these all presume a musical reference. Let two examples chosen at random stand for all:

Landlady, count the lawin
The day is near the dawin,
Ye're a' blind drunk, boys,
And I'm but jolly fou.
Hey tutti, taiti,
How tutti, taiti—
Wha's fou now?

And this:

My love she's but a lassie yet;
My love she's but a lassie yet;
We'll let her stand a year or twa,
She'll no be half sae saucy yet.
I rue the day I sought her, O;
I rue the day I sought her, O;
Wha gets her needs na say she's woo'd,
But he may say he's bought her, O!

This is as much as to say that in sober truth we owe the existence of Burns's lyrics to Scottish folk-music and Burns's familiarity with it. And of course the debt does not stop there. His texts are themselves so interwoven with traditional matter that the more we know of his antecedents, the less sure we become that his part in the most spontaneous and best-loved songs is more than a cleaning-up of the clarty, a filling in of the forgotten, and a civilizing of the ramgunshock—forbye the putting a wheen smeddum in the smeerless.

By its very nature, the folk-tune is better suited to pure lyric than to narrative. The folk-tune is always beginning again, at an unchanging pace, at the same emotional pitch, in unvarying statement. It takes kindly to a series of parallel expressions of an

emotion—a single emotion, whether joy or sadness, love or grief—where the element of story is withheld. Narrative asks naturally to vary the pace, to change the pitch, to introduce delays or suspensions or surprises, but always to be going on and never repeating. The effectiveness of the folk-ballad—when it is effective—depends partly on the tension that arises from this opposition, the musical form exerting a steadying and controlling power over the extravagant text. But it was to be expected that sooner or later, as music became less objective and more impressionistic, there would be an attempt to make the musical vehicle reflect more intimately the changes of meaning and mood in the text,—in the smaller forms as in the larger. The solution was not completely attained until the nineteenth-century art song came into being. One answer of the eighteenth century to this problem was the *glee,* which employed a varied succession of short subjects, each one being brought to a cadential pause before the next was taken up. One is tempted to call the glee the poor musician's madrigal; but it took a good musician to write a good glee. Yet another answer, closer to the folk level, is offered by Burns in his so-called "cantata," "The Jolly Beggars." Here the connecting narrative tissue is called "recitative," probably without any expectation of its being actually sung; while musical variety is attained by the introduction of a series of songs, each independent of the others and sung by a different personality.

Burns had of course no way of making the details of his text conform to the details of his musical medium. There is, for example, nothing in the music to which he set his sardonic "Merry hae I been teethin' a heckle" that can bring out or truly express the sense of his words:

> Bitter in dule I licket my winnin's
> O' marryin' Bess to gie her a slave.
> Blest be the hour she cool'd in her linens,
> And blythe be the bird that sings on her grave.

Yet there is often a chameleon quality about these Scottish tunes that makes them notably adaptable to different uses. The same air will be mischievous and spirited or pathetic, according to the speed and mood in which it is sung. A good example is "Hey tutti taiti," which we have already noticed as the drinking song, "Landlady count the lawin," and which Burns made world-famous by his words, "Scots wha hae," and to which, later, Lady Nairne wrote her tender "Land of the Leal." The adaptability appears to be especially Scottish, and I suspect that part of the cause lies in the gapped scales so frequently appearing in the music of that country, so uncommon in English folk-music. These are natural bridges from mode to mode; and each pentatonic scale has latent reference to three heptatonic and two hexatonic scales, every one with its own special character and feeling.

VI

By way of conclusion, looking back over the century, we can I think distinguish two phenomena of greatest significance for the vital interconnections of music and literature. The first culminates in the first half, the second in the latter half, of the century. The first is the strenuous and almost successful effort to evolve a language that could convey general and abstract truths with a high degree of objectivity, by means of the mutually interpretative support of which words and tones were capable: a conventional language that, rather than pursuing novelties, relied, as did all classical diction at its best, upon using the accepted modes of expression with deepened awareness, refined sensitivity and precision. The second phenomenon is the part, the multifarious and far-reaching part, played by popular song in the transition from classicism to individualism. The influence of Percy's *Reliques* on the theory and practice of the elder romantic poets has long been acknowledged; but the inseparable role of humble melody in conditioning the formal and stylistic habits of the ballad and of all popular lyric has, I think, been imper-

fectly recognized. Here, too, but from the opposite direction, a common and universal language is being evolved, not by the cerebration of an aristocratic tradition, but by the gradual and unconscious sifting out of those graces and subtleties that could not be immediately seized and retained by the unforced memory of the people as a whole. Burns's best-loved songs speak to the mind and heart of our common humanity; and it was only, it would seem, by descending to rest for a historical moment "flat on the nether springs" that a new cycle could be begun on a radically different principle, the exploration of individualism.

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